

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-16. Canceled.

17. (New) A fusing apparatus for fusing toner onto a media, the apparatus comprising:

- (a) a transport belt for transporting the media in a transport direction;
- (b) a heating element through which the transport belt transports the media and positioned at a first angle relative to the transport direction;
- (c) a plurality of downstream strips spaced along the belt on a downstream side of the heating element; and
- (d) a plurality of upstream strips spaced along the belt on an upstream side of the heating element; wherein, during at least a portion of the transport, at least one downstream strip and at least one upstream strip are in continuous contact with the medium.

18. (New) A fusing apparatus as in claim 17 further comprising (e) a cooling element through which the transport belt transports the media and positioned at the first angle relative to the transport direction; the plurality of downstream strips are downstream of the cooling element; and, during at least during a portion of the transport, one downstream strip and at least one upstream strip are in continuous contact with the media.

19. (New) The fusing element as in claim 17, wherein the plurality of upstream strips each include a first endpoint and a second endpoint and two or more ends of the first endpoints terminate at an angle parallel or substantially parallel to the first angle.

20. (New) The fusing element as in claim 19, wherein the plurality of downstream strips each include a first endpoint and a second endpoint and two or more of the first endpoints terminate at an angle parallel or substantially parallel to the first angle.

21. (New) The fusing element as in claim 17, wherein, at one particular instance of time, a leading edge of the media contacts only one downstream strip and a trailing edge contacts only one upstream strip.

22. (New) The fusing element as in claim 18, wherein the plurality of upstream strips each include a first endpoint and a second endpoint and two or more ends of the first endpoints terminate at an angle parallel or substantially parallel to the first angle.

23. (New) The fusing element as in claim 22, wherein the plurality of downstream strips each include a first endpoint and a second endpoint and two or more of the first endpoints terminate at an angle parallel or substantially parallel to the first angle.

24. (New) The fusing element as in claim 18, wherein, at one particular instance of time, a leading edge of the media contacts only one downstream strip and a trailing edge contacts only one upstream strip.